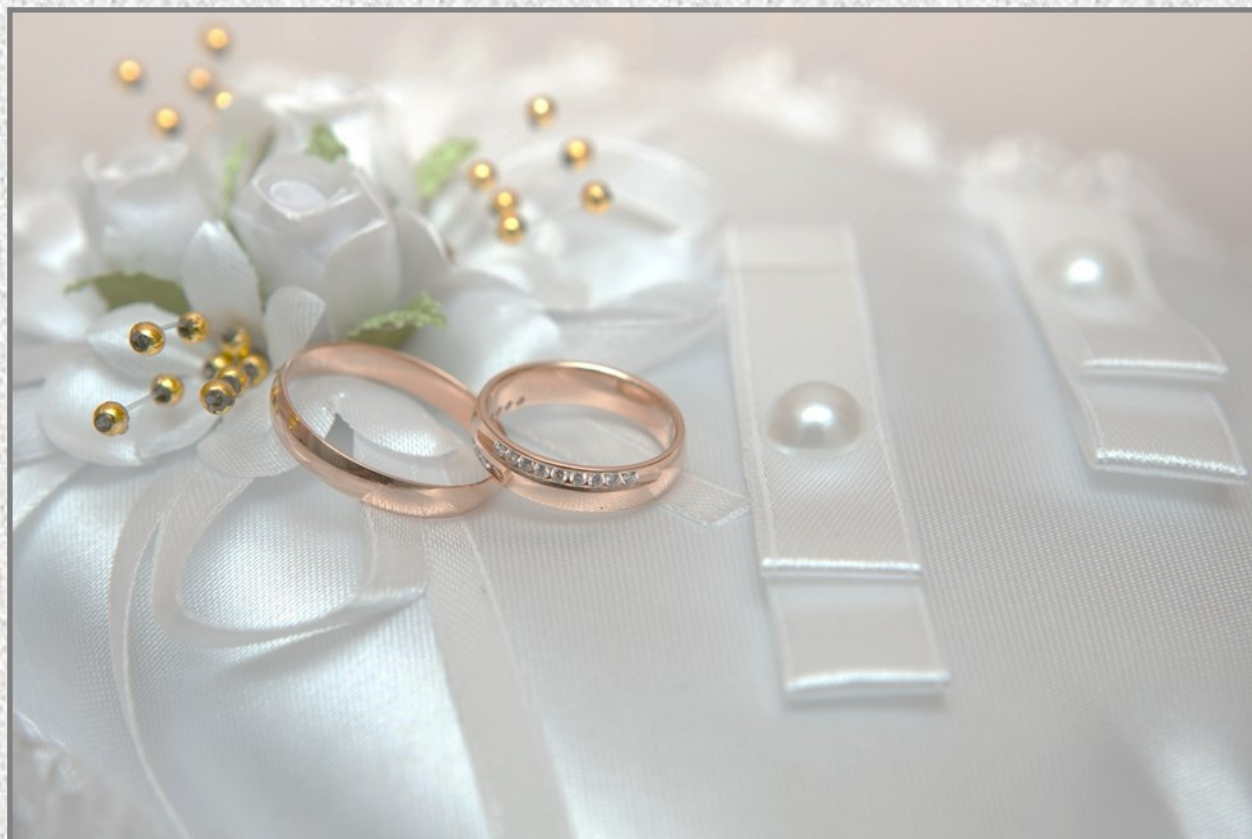


St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church
Wedding Guidelines



*Your marriage in the Catholic Church
calls you to be a visible sign
of Christ's Love to the World.*



Dear Beloved Engaged Couples,

St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church congratulates you on your engagement and welcomes the opportunity to help you carefully prepare for your upcoming wedding. The information in this packet covers the requirements of the parish and the Diocese of St. Petersburg. We hope outlining what is expected will assist you in making your special day go smoothly.

Please read through the information. If you have not already done so, please contact Meghan Snyder, Administrative Assistant, at 727-273-8600 x 110 to begin the wedding process.

It will be an honor to assist you in making your wedding day beautiful and to help prepare you for a life-long marriage of love and happiness! God bless you.

In His Love,

Fr. Eric Peters, Pastor

Fr. George Varkey, MST
Associate Pastor

Marriage Preparation Guidelines

To marry in the Catholic Church, either the bride *or* groom must be a practicing Roman Catholic and registered at a parish. The Catholic Church requires six months of premarital preparation. Here is what to expect during this time of preparation for your special day:

Premarital Inventory (PMI): You will complete a premarital inventory at your first meeting with the priest. This inventory rates the couple's compatibility on many issues, such as interests and activities, role expectations, personal adjustment to marriage, etc. Once the parish has received the inventory results, the priest will contact you to schedule another meeting to discuss the results.

Premarital Investigation: At your first meeting, the priest will give you a premarital investigation form which must be completed and returned to the parish office promptly. If you do not receive one at your meeting, please call Meghan at the parish office, and she will mail it to you.

Witness Forms: Please contact Meghan at the parish office to give her the names and addresses of four names (two for the bride and two for the groom) to serve as witnesses to attest to your freedom to marry. These should be people you have known for a long time. Meghan will contact the witnesses to have them fill out a freedom to marry form. This differs from the witnesses (Maid/Maiden of Honor and Best Man) who will witness your wedding vows on your wedding day.

Wedding Scheduling: Your wedding date will be scheduled only when we have received the premarital investigation and have found you free to marry. Only one wedding can be scheduled on any day. If the date you desire already has a wedding scheduled, you must pick a different date.

Meeting with a Sponsor Couple: After your second meeting, you will be contacted to schedule a one-time appointment with our sponsor couple. They are available to meet you at the parish office on Thursdays. This is an excellent opportunity to meet with another married couple who can share their wisdom from many years of marriage.

Pre-Cana Preparation: As part of your marriage preparation, each couple must attend a Pre-Cana marriage preparation program. Brochures are enclosed for your information. The fees are listed in the brochures. Please look at the dates and decide on a date that is good for you and register as soon as possible, even if the date is a long way off; this helps to ensure your spot at the retreat. You will be given a certificate of completion after the program. **Please bring or email a copy of that certificate to Meghan at the parish office for your file. (meghan@stanpr.org)**

Baptismal Certificates: You must provide a recent copy of your baptismal certificates issued from your church of baptism and signed/dated within six months of the wedding date. You must tell the church that you are requesting this certificate for marriage and that you need to have the certificate with notations. If you are not Catholic but are baptized, please present a baptismal certificate from that church. If no certificate is available, please submit a letter from a parent or family member who can attest to your baptism, mainly because they were present for it. If circumstances exist other than those mentioned here, please discuss them with the priest or deacon preparing you.

Marriage License: Up to 60 days before the date of your wedding, a marriage license must be obtained. You must bring the license to the rehearsal, which the priest will take from you. After the wedding, the priest will sign the license, along with the best man and maid/maiden of honor. The parish office will mail it to the county courthouse to be processed. Your church of baptism will also be notified that you received the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony. Please remember this to avoid embarrassment on the date of your wedding. **If you fail to present your marriage license either at your rehearsal or on the day of your wedding, the priest assigned to your wedding will not be able to witness the ceremony, i.e., you will not be getting married on that day.** So please make a note to obtain this most important document. If your marriage is being convalidated, a copy of the original marriage license must be in your wedding file.

Wedding Fees: The wedding fee for registered parishioners is \$500 and \$650 for non-parishioners. The fee must be paid two weeks before your wedding. Checks should be made payable to St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church and either dropped off or mailed to Meghan Snyder, St. Thomas Aquinas Roman Catholic Church, 8320 Old County Road 54, New Port Richey, FL 34653. If you are only being prepared for marriage at St. Thomas Aquinas and getting married in another parish, the fee is \$200. If the cost poses an undue financial burden, please discuss it with the priest preparing you.



Music Guidelines

Please contact Dan O'Hara, our Music Director, at least three months before your wedding date. He will meet with you to plan a beautiful wedding based on the Church's standards for music and liturgical celebrations. He can be reached at 727-372-8600 x128 or email him at danoharaatsta@gmail.com.

For helpful information regarding Catholic engagement and marriage, visit the website www.foryourmarriage.org/.



Notes...

It is the responsibility of the wedding party to remove anything that has been brought into the church, except the flowers, so that the church will be ready for our Masses later that day.

